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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GUATEMALA 000368

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH ATTORNEY GENERAL  
VELASQUEZ

REF: A. 07 GUATEMALA 115  
[1B](#). GUATEMALA 79  
[1C](#). GUATEMALA 164

Classified By: Ambassador McFarland for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[11](#). (C) Summary: During his March 12 meeting with Attorney General Velasquez, the Ambassador raised various issues, including the importance of investigating killings of unionists, the ineffective work of the IPR and anti-money laundering prosecutors, progress on the GOG's wiretapping capability, and the recently passed bill against trafficking in persons. Velasquez expressed optimism that the two-year mandate of the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) would be renewed, and frustration over his ministry's lack of resources. The Ambassador used the meeting as an opportunity to express our continued support for the Attorney General. End Summary.

[12](#). (C) On March 12, the Ambassador met with Attorney General Amilcar Velasquez to review pending issues and to express the Embassy's continued support. The Ambassador discussed the January 10 arrest of the prime suspect in the 2007 murder of port union leader Pedro Zamora (refs A, B) and emphasized the importance of investigating killings of all unionists. Velasquez confirmed that a suspect had been detained and that a court case would begin in April once the investigative phase concluded. He indicated that he would "keep an eye" on the case, given its high profile. Velasquez also informed the Ambassador of plans to reorganize the Special Prosecutor's Unit for Crimes Against Journalists and Unionists so that a single unit could focus just on labor crimes.

[13](#). (C) The Ambassador discussed the ineffective performance of both IPR prosecutor Norma Bonilla and Chief Anti-Money Laundering Prosecutor Leopoldo Liu. The Ambassador reminded Velasquez that he had asked him in November 2008 about Bonilla's work and that Velasquez had promised to replace her when her extended sick leave ended. Velasquez said that Bonilla had just returned from leave and that he had already informed her that she would be transferred to the Office of the General Counsel. Shortly after the meeting took place, Bonilla was removed and replaced by Tatiana Morales. Velasquez shared the Ambassador's concern that Liu was focused on prosecuting small bulk-cash carriers intercepted at the airport rather than prosecuting major money launderers. Velasquez stated that he was considering replacing Liu and asked the Ambassador for the names of a half-dozen companies on which prosecutors should focus their

anti-money laundering investigations. The Ambassador committed to providing a list. (Comment: The Attorney General likely knows which companies should be targeted and may be seeking political cover. End Comment.)

14. (C) Velasquez stated that progress is being made to implement the wiretapping provision of the Law Against Organized Crime. The company that will provide the necessary equipment gave a demonstration to the Public Ministry on March 20, and prosecutors and National Civil Police (PNC) agents are being trained. (Note: Some will receive additional training in Puerto Rico through NAS. End note.) When asked whether the President's Office had approved the regulation that would permit the PNC to reorganize to conduct wiretapping, Velasquez stated that he would have to consult with Minister of Government Salvador Gandara later that day. Velasquez hoped that wiretapping would be operational in April, but believed May would be more realistic. (Note: In January, he and Gandara anticipated it would be operational in March/April. Despite delays, this government has made more progress on wiretapping than its predecessors. End note.)

15. (C) Velasquez was dubious that the new Law Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (ref C) would increase prosecutions of these crimes. He acknowledged that the Public Ministry's Special Unit Against Trafficking in Persons lacked personnel and committed to addressing this shortcoming. Velasquez lamented his ministry's limited budget, characterizing it as insufficient to hire new prosecutors and provide adequate security for his personnel.

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16. (C) According to Velasquez, the Public Ministry has had good relations with CICIG, and he was optimistic that their collaboration would result in one or two important prosecutions in the next few weeks. He also expressed optimism that CICIG's two-year mandate would be renewed.

17. (C) Comment: As usual, Velasquez seemed eager to cooperate on the range of issues discussed. The news about Bonilla's transfer is welcome, but her replacement's effectiveness will be key. The Embassy will follow up with Velasquez on prosecution of the Zamora case, provide to the Public Ministry a suggested list of companies to target for its anti-money laundering investigations, and closely track progress on the GOG's wiretapping capability.  
McFarland